

Read

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH
UNTO THE CHURCHES.—*Rev. ii. 7.*

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NELLY AND ABBY.

A FAMILIAR CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO COUSINS, ON MARRIAGE.

Nelly.—Dear cousin Abby, I have been very anxious indeed to see you ever since I heard of the New Revelation. I know that nothing has ever come up yet in this Church, (unless it is now) that could stumble you. But I think now, when your John comes to get two or three more wives, you will feel as keenly as any of us; for I know that he has always been your idol; and to see him bestowing his affections upon others, as he has heretofore so exclusively done upon you; now, as sure as your name is Abby—but I won't say what you may do, because you can always command your feelings; but I really believe, that if my husband should provoke me in that way, he might get a salutation from the candle-stick or broom-stick, sooner than I would ever kiss him again! Why, really; if I must ever submit to see my husband promenading about with —; well, George knows better than ever to undertake such a thing with me; but I was going to say, if he ever should, I would just like to pick one or two women for him that I could select; I'll warrant that my George would learn to be content with his Nelly, ever after! Now Abby, if wives don't look out for themselves, who will look out for them? I would get the ugliest looking women that I could find; I wouldn't much care if they were black, and if they were to throw the fire-poker at him sometimes. George knows that I love him dearly, but really I—I—don't see how you ever can submit to it, Abby!

Abby.—Well, cousin Nelly, be assured

that I am very glad to see you, though rather sorry to see your mind fluttered with the New Revelation! It is true, that I have never stumbled at any of the doctrines of this Church, because they all seem so pure and so well calculated to bless and unite all who will observe them in sincerity. Whenever anything is revealed for my faith to rest upon as an abiding principle of salvation, I always give it a prayerful and dispassionate consideration, knowing that God's ways are not as ours, and the wisest ways of men are often very foolish compared with God's.

Nelly.—Yes, Abby; but what wisdom is there in my being tied to my George with a lot of other women, which can flatter and simper, and make him believe anything they please? And George can be flattered into almost anything, and I must bear it! There's one thing I should like to have him know at once, and that is, I shall never work as I have done. I shall be supported like a lady; then, if he has got any surplus to bestow upon other wives—but I interrupted you in your remarks, Abby; but if you had slept as little as I have, since I heard of this, Abby—well, go on and I will hear you.

Abby.—I was about to say, cousin, that I consider prayerfully whatever God reveals, before I make any harsh or severe speeches, or grieve that Holy Spirit which will always both enlighten and comfort those who are meek and lowly, and willing to learn of Christ. Now, cousin Nelly,

to be plain, I do not know what right you have even to call George your husband, or that I have to call John my husband. What the Lord has not bound upon earth cannot be bound in heaven. I would not like to displease the only authority that can legally unite me to the man that I dearly love. Before I dare to set up an *exclusive* claim to John, who is to be Prince Regent, and heir apparent to several thrones and principalities, I would like to have my own marriage ratified and sealed, lest others should be sealed before me, and refuse to admit me into a matrimonial relationship with them. Now if God is appointing His sons on the earth to fill thrones and occupy many principalities, and my husband means to be as worthy to fill thrones as others, then I will be content to share with him one throne, and rejoice at the same time to see others share with him other thrones, while my capacity will not allow me to share any more than my own. I know also, Nelly, that I appreciate a kind, intelligent, noble husband, that is ordained and anointed like unto Abraham, to be King over innumerable myriads of the human family, so highly, that I shall not make myself a widow or servant throughout all eternity by opposing what God has clearly revealed by all His Prophets, since the world began. The consequence of my opposing the Patriarchal Order of Marriage would be the loss of my husband for all eternity. If this matter concerned us only for this life, it would then be a subject of some comparative indifference whether we are admitted to a family relationship or not, for our life is as a vapour that continueth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. But dear cousin, the great question is this—will we unite with the plurality Order of Ancient Patriarchs, or will we consent voluntarily to be doomed to eternal celibacy? This is the true division of the question. One or the other we *must* choose. We cannot be married to our husbands for eternity, without subscribing to the law that admits a plurality of wives. I know that you, Nelly, love your George, and I love my John, more than gold and silver, and all earthly treasures; and to lose all conjugal claims upon him or upon any other man whatever, is what I never can submit to, while the present light of eternity shines upon my mind. The promise to me of being the mother of an innumerable posterity of intelligent lives,

will neither be lessened, impaired, nor delayed, if my husband should take more wives. Consequently, it is my desire that he should bless other women even as he does me, if his doing so does not diminish the sum of my blessings.

Nelly.—Let me interrupt you a moment, cousin Abby, before I forget the point that I wish to call up. Do you mean to say that a female cannot have any husband for the next world or for all the eternities to come, unless she is agreeable to the same law of marriage by which Sarah and Rachel were governed?

Abby.—Yes, cousin, I understand it in this light. The promise of God, to multiply Abraham, was made to all who should have the like faith, or to all who should have true faith in Jesus Christ, in whatever period of the world they might live. And if any who were worthy of the promise made to Abraham, did not in this life receive wives and children, so that their generations can be seen, still the way is prepared so that they can receive a fullness of the same blessings. The order of plurality of wives is an everlasting and ceaseless order, designed to exalt the choicest men and women to the most superlative excellence, dominion, and glory. But I perceive the idea that is running in your mind, Nelly. You want to know if you cannot enjoy the society of your dear George as a husband in the eternal world, without allowing other females to share him with you?

Nelly.—Yes, cousin, that is just what I want to know; you have expressed my idea better than I could myself, because the idea of not having my husband in all eternity is dreadful; I know that I could never submit to it! Never see my husband again while eternity wastes away! Darling George, bless him; I can hardly endure his absence for a month! If I did not love him, I should not think so much about it. And I believe that every wife that is not destitute of natural affection, and has a kind, good husband, must prize the conjugal state above all other society: and then our little Edward and Susan are so fond of their father, that I know we could never endure a separation for eternity. But why cannot I be married to him for eternity, and have him alone to myself?

Abby.—I have thought very seriously of this question, cousin, as well as you; and what at first appeared to me as de-

sirable to a wife, I must confess now seems to wear a different aspect. If your George and you should be alone by the side of such a king as Abraham or Solomon, with all his queens and their numerous servants and waiting maids in courtly livery, would he not look like a mere rushlight by the side of such suns, or rather would he be seen at all! I should almost fear that your George would be taken for a servant, and you for a waiting maid; or if they should, in the galaxy and splendour of 144,000 such suns as Solomon, happen to see you and your George with a king's coronet upon his head, they might think him short of wedding garments, or that the selfishness of his wife had stunted his growth to such an insignificant, crab-tree size! Besides, a Queen to him that has his hundreds of wives in eternity, with children as numberless as the stars of heaven, would receive intelligence, wealth, honour, children, and dominion, in some measure proportioned to the exaltations of her husband and king; while your George, not having much to look after besides you, could not demand the same measure of wealth, honour, and dominion, because he could use upon you and your little family but a small pittance of what pertains to one moving in a wider and far more exalted sphere. Your intelligence, and that of your children, could not rise higher than the intelligence of your husband. Consequently you must see yourself and husband, and your children, continually outstripped in intelligence by all others around you. Your social circle must consequently be very limited at home. And your own offspring would not be as numerous. The motive which would lead you to retain your husband exclusively to yourself, would contribute to make you comparatively unfruitful, and also vitiate the mental and bodily faculties of your offspring, and sow the seeds of death and mortality in their systems. I have come to the conclusion, Nelly, that the one-wife system not only degenerates the human family, both physically and intellectually, but it is entirely incompatible with philosophical notions of immortality; it is a lure to temptation, and has always proved a curse to a people. Hence I see the wisdom of God in not tolerating any such system among the celestial worthies who are to be kings and queens unto God for ever.

Nelly.—What's physically and intellectually?

Abby.—Why, their bodies are not so well formed for health and long life, nor do their minds possess much sense.

Nelly.—But what temptation is there in the one-wife system, more than in the other?

Abby.—Why, even the beasts leave each other alone when there is a prospect of increase. When God reveals the Patriarchal system of plurality to any people, He reveals it for their good, and for the blessing of both men and women; it is quite as great a blessing to the latter as to the former. And if they cannot abide that order, it shows conclusively that they cannot abide the purest and greatest blessings of eternity.

Nelly.—Why, Abby, how is that? for I am sure that, if I know my heart, I can abide anything that is good. I desire to have any and every *real* blessing. But if George should get some women that are really undermining, and all honey to his face, it would be a queer mess; I must be altered some before I could see such things with patience.

Abby.—Well, one subject at once; and if you wouldn't mix up your feelings with your questions so much, I might answer your mind more distinctly perhaps. You say that you desire any and every blessing. The new Covenant is revealed in order to bless both men and women beyond what they otherwise could be blessed. When Jacob had many wives, he loved each of them more than he could have done any one of them that he might have had alone without the others. And his wives loved him and each other in the same ratio, and the tide and current of union and love among the whole family were stronger than they otherwise could be. For instance, Nelly, you and George, when constituted into a large family like that of Abraham, would enjoy a greater amount of intelligence, and a greater share of love also, than you possibly could in that single, contracted order which you seem to desire. One simple and irresistible reason is, that God has determined to bestow His greatest blessings upon the liberal order, and only very stinted favours upon the narrow, contracted order which you seem to desire. In the former order your children are all the lawful heirs of thrones and kingdoms, and in your favourite order they are only the heirs of servile inferiority.

Nelly.—Well, I shouldn't like to have my little darling Ned heir to anything very inferior. I would rather he would have a dozen wives than to be eternally a servant to somebody else. You know that Ned is as clever a boy of his age as any other, if his mother does say it. But do you mean to say, Abby (to bring the matter right home,) that if I am not married according to God's order and approbation, before the resurrection, that I shall always have to remain single, and also be your servant, or the servant of some one that is married according to that order?

Abby.—That is what God has most clearly revealed in many Scriptures. If God's obedient sons and daughters are to be the reigning Kings and Queens over all people, and those only are permitted to propagate lives eternally who are thus married and ultimately crowned, then it follows, of course, that all others must obey their Rulers. And whom they obey, His servants they are!

Nelly.—Well, I believe there may be some people who would sooner obey the very devil than bow to this order.

Abby.—Yes, cousin, it may be that very many will be so foolish as to travel the broad road; but still, as the devils are all subject to God and His obedient sons, even then, such as serve devils must be the servants of such as are crowned Kings and Queens, because devils are obliged to obey and tremble.

Nelly.—You do beat all to prove your points! I wouldn't like to have George hear your arguments, for I know that he would swallow them down like so much honey. But is there not anybody to be made Kings and Queens unto God over the earth but such as yield to this order?

Abby.—I have already told you that no others will be made Rulers.

Nelly.—I know that Kings and Queens rule over us here on the earth, and some of them are very cruel and hard-hearted, but I shouldn't think that God would allow kings under Him to conduct in this way.

Abby.—No, Nelly; for God has said, that he that ruleth over men must be just. And people will be much better off in the next world, (even if they are the servants of such good rulers as Abraham, whose officers will be peace and executors righteousness,) than they now are in bondage to the rich and proud.

Nelly.—Yes; if persons can't pay up rent

the very day it is due, they are turned off with all their little ones, and their furniture sold up to pay. It does nearly break my heart to see some families turned into the street barefoot, to beg or sing for what people may please to give them. And then, so many of them are almost obliged to take to bad ways. And I shouldn't be very sorry to see some unfeeling masters have to change places with their servants long enough to see and feel the difference. You know that poor lass, (and a sweeter beauty you never saw) whose father failed in business, and died, and her heart-broken mother went crazy, and the children were put out, and she went to service; and when the master couldn't prevail upon her in any other way, he gave her chloroform, I think they call it, in order to stupefy her, and now she is riding about in her silk velvet, wholly lost to all good society? There is no chance for a poor girl in these times. I wish all the factories were burnt down, but I ought not to say so. How few poor girls can keep a good character that go to them. But it is often the best they can do, after all. When I first heard of this New Revelation, I thought it was a cunning plan laid to make men and women conduct worse among themselves than they now do, if possible, and I snatched it out of George's hand and threw it into the fire; for I have seen so much abomination of this kind, that I didn't want my George to get in such a way as most married men do. I believe there is not another place in England as bad as this. Tell about a hundred thousand common ladies in London! my scratch; it is more difficult to tell who *aint* bad here, than it is to tell who *is* profligate. Then, to see what nice-looking females will drink and swear so! And I don't blame the women near as much as I do the men. The men! they are the scamps, that have made women so bad as they are. Then, to hear these women sneer at the idea of nursing an infant, calling them brats, saying they had rather kill two of such troublesome, snarling things than to raise up one of them. It would make your blood chill, Abby, to hear their talk! Whether they have gotten so accustomed to murder the young innocents, or whether the men they associate with, teach them these principles, I don't know.

Abby.—Why, Nelly, how do you learn that there is such profligacy and murder

in this christian land? I believe all that you say, and even more, and much worse; but how do you find out such things?

Nelly.—Why you can't walk the streets without finding out enough to make you ashamed to be seen abroad. But, Ramsey, that keeps a large shop in Park Square, near the Opera, whose best customers are of this sort of folks, tells his wife Susan, that is George's sister you know, and she tells me. Now Ramsey, himself, has imbibed some very singular principles about these matters, and he is rarely at home with his own family, and much of his earnings is thrown away upon just such persons as we are speaking about. His wife Susan sees it, and she don't hesitate to say that she would rather Ramsey had a half-dozen of virtuous wives, who could be fit for respectable women to associate with, and would be governed by the pure laws of heaven, after the example of Abraham and Jacob's wives, than he should do as he does. But such company as he now keeps, make him wholly unfit for domestic and social duties. And Susan says that she never wants to bring up a family that shall be obliged to witness their father's example.

Abby.—My dear cousin Nelly, I am very happy to see that you are so well apprised of the awful profligacy and sexual pollution that exist in this place; although the same complaint exists in all other places; for the whole earth is defiled. I hope you are sufficiently sensible that the Lord, by this New Revelation, is determined to save a chosen few, whose garments shall not be defiled, and who will keep themselves unspotted from the world. These few He will make rulers over the rest. For righteous rulers will make happy and peaceful subjects; but when the wicked rule, the people always mourn, and vile men walk on every side. And vile men are the leading cause that produces vile women the world over. And I believe it is generally admitted that the rulers, in these times, are often the fruitful sources of the very worst examples. For oppression and avarice, and extravagant

profligacy, gluttony and debauchery, they take the lead. And as long as this is the case, evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse. But you did not tell me what singular principles Ramsey had imbibed, which look so strange.

Nelly.—Oh, I was just going to tell you. Ramsey believes that marriage is a mere human institution or device of men, and consequently that one man has as good a right to administer the ceremony of marriage as another has. And he says that a magistrate, while he may have a legal right, has no more moral right to marry persons than he has; and a priest that is not inspired directly from heaven, has no more right to officiate than a magistrate. In short he thinks that all persons should be left to act in these matters for themselves, freely, as they would in any other bargain or traffic; and when they choose to dissolve partnership, they should be free to do so. He says that the magistrate or the parson has no more moral right to keep a woman that he calls his wife, than he (Ramsey) has to keep one that he calls his Dolly. He thinks that if one is prostitution, the other is also. And if there is any difference, the prostitution of the parson is the worst, because it is the most barefaced and unblushing, being a thing legalized without shame. Now I believe that both Ramsey and the parson are wrong, and that neither of them ought to take a wife without permission from God.

Abby.—I perceive the ingenuity of your brother-in-law, Ramsey. There is much plausibility in his arguments. But the Scriptures tell us that God gives men their wives; and God takes them away from transgressors; and God punishes with death the man or woman that violates the marriage covenant; and those who will not conform to God's order and law of marriage, He will judge. Ramsey's doom will be no worse than that of the parson. But both are commanded to repent, or have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.

(To be concluded in our next.)

It is not so difficult a task to plant truths as to root out old errors; for there is this paradox in men, they run after that which is new, but are prejudiced in favour of that which is old.

WITH a double vigilance should we watch our actions, when we reflect that good and bad ones are never childless, and that, in both cases, the offspring goes beyond the parent, every good begetting a better, every bad a worse.